

# NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS REPORT

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REPORT ON THE SOCIAL FACTORS CONCERNED WITH  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A LEAD HAZARD ELIMINATION PROGRAM



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

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NBS PROJECT

4218388

November 16, 1971

NBS REPORT

10 636

## REPORT ON THE SOCIAL FACTORS CONCERNED WITH PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A LEAD HAZARD ELIMINATION PROGRAM

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Sponsored by

Department of Housing and Urban Development

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## ABSTRACT

This report deals with the social interactions that take place among the various groups and individuals involved in a lead paint hazard elimination program. Potential problems have been identified, and particular emphasis has been given to presenting a variety of practical suggestions for overcoming these problems.





REPORT ON THE SOCIAL FACTORS CONCERNED WITH  
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1. INTRODUCTION

Available incidence figures indicate that lead paint poisoning in children in the United States is a serious social problem. Unlike alcoholism or drug abuse, which are extremely difficult to eliminate because of the pathologies and psychologies of the persons involved, eliminating the cause of lead paint poisoning is relatively simple--eliminate the lead paint in buildings. But it is here that the simplicity stops, for the removal of lead paint which is potentially hazardous to children would be extremely difficult and costly. Therefore, most cities having deleading programs limit treatment to those homes occupied by a child diagnosed as having lead poisoning. Not surprisingly, the hazard elimination techniques utilized have been those which city officials consider will allow them to do the most deleading for the funds available to them. And frequently these funds are minimal. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that implementation of an effective deleading program must include consideration of the whole social interaction <sup>1/</sup>process. It is the purpose of this report to discuss the major aspects of social interactions as they relate to the elimination of the lead paint poisoning hazard.

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<sup>1/</sup> For the purposes of this report, social interaction is essentially defined as a reciprocal process in which two or more persons are aware of and have an effect on each other. Each person uses the behavior of the other persons as a reference point to guide his own conduct, so that he can act in a meaningful fashion with them.

## 2. RELATIONSHIP OF THE FEDERAL TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The Federal Government can serve local authorities in two ways. The first is in an advisory capacity. Because it is so large in terms of manpower and money, the Federal Government can carry out a wide variety of activities, and is also able to employ people of many highly specialized and diversified fields. State and local government officials are always encouraged to consult with Federal employees on any problem for which they may want advice or information.

Second, funding provided by the Federal Government assists and supplements the carrying out of local programs. Usually, the local government is required to meet certain stipulations in order to receive the funds. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Rehabilitation Program provides Federal funds<sup>2/</sup> for efforts at the local level. There are several requirements having sociological overtones which a city must meet before it can receive Federal funds. Among these are requirements to (1) actively utilize local leadership and organizations which can profitably assist in the community's efforts, (2) provide job and enterprise opportunities for members of the affected community, (3) provide relocation assistance to occupants being displaced by the rehabilitation, and (4) obtain prior commitments from local lending insti-

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<sup>2/</sup> Procedure for Selection of Cities for Large-Scale Rehabilitation Projects, Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Rehabilitation, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C., July 26, 1971.

tutions to provide the construction and mortgage financing necessary to carry out the rehabilitation program.

### 3. RELATIONSHIP OF RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS

When a community plans a service program in which more than one agency will have responsibilities, the need for maximum cooperation among the agencies cannot be overemphasized. In order to attain the program objectives it is necessary to have three assets--recipients to serve, resources and personnel. Rarely does a single agency have a sufficient quantity of these attributes to function without the cooperation of another agency. A lead hazard elimination program is an excellent example of this very problem. Most health departments do not have the personnel, expertise, and/or funds to do housing repairs, and most housing repair departments are not equipped to do blood lead tests on children. Thus, the capabilities of both departments are necessary for an effective lead poisoning control program.

Where there are multiple sources of authority administering a program, maximum interagency communication and cooperation is not always attained. <sup>3/</sup> One reason for this might be that the particular goals and objectives of the agencies conflict with each other, even though they share the same fundamental values. Another reason for

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<sup>3/</sup> An example of a study on this subject: Levine, D., White, P.E., and Paul, B.D., "Community Interorganizational Problems in Providing Medical Care and Social Services", American Journal of Public Health 53, (8), August 1963, pp. 1183-1193.

lack of cooperation among agencies is the discrepancy in the standards for evaluating success and the means for achieving objectives. It is also likely that there will be little cooperation if an agency is considered to be intruding on another's domain or is judged to be not carrying out its function as it should. If, for whatever reason, cooperation fails to develop among organizations, the result is detrimental to the organizations involved and to the effective conduct of the service program.

The following recommendations on increasing interagency communication and cooperation should be considered by any city planning a lead hazard elimination program.

- (1) At the outset of the program, the responsible agencies should have a joint meeting in which each agency is made aware of the major goals, functions, available resources, and problems of the other agencies.
- (2) Each agency should try as much as possible to make its resources (i.e., equipment, personnel) available to all groups involved.
- (3) Each agency should appoint someone to act in a liaison capacity with other group representatives. This should at least assist in keeping the lines of communication open among the agencies.
- (4) Each agency should report formally to the other agencies involved as the program proceeds so that each group is kept abreast of how the total program is progressing.
- (5) A central coordinator, chosen from outside the agencies involved, should be appointed to administer the program. This should help to prevent feelings that one agency is favored over another.



#### 4. RELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO THE COMMUNITY <sup>4/</sup>

##### 4.1. Education

The relationship of the local government to the recipient community is critical to the success of the program. Optimally, community support would be present from the inception of the program. Therefore, when a planning group is established, city officials should carefully analyze the spheres of influence in the community and attempt to recruit community leaders to serve on the initial planning committee. Then, not only will the local government officials be able to educate the community leaders to the lead poisoning problem, but the planning committee will also benefit from the suggestions of people who know their community intimately.

Once a local government is committed to a program of eliminating the lead paint poisoning hazard (resources permitting), the first step the planning group should take is to initiate a comprehensive education program for the community. There is a great deal of groundwork necessary to set up a really effective education program, but it may determine the ultimate success or failure of the total program. In establishing a comprehensive educational program, the first step should be to ascertain what means could be used to reach the people in the affected communities. One possible way would be to have the

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<sup>4/</sup> Community is defined here as persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional common ties. From Hillary, George A., Jr., "Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement," Rural Sociology 20, June 1955, p. 111.

cooperating community members use their influence to summon support for the lead elimination program. Since this is a program which directly affects children, it might also be possible to work in cooperation with the community day care centers to acquaint the parents with the seriousness of the problem. Another alternative might be to have experts give talks and audio-visual presentations to local PTA's and citizen's groups (if any).

Programs directed toward the community could be extremely useful. Ministers, for example, could include a message about lead paint poisoning in their sermons. Community-oriented TV and radio programs could include periodic news features on the lead poisoning problem. Many persons who lack direct experience with the government and its programs will make their decision about the quality of a program on the basis of what the mass media say.<sup>5/</sup> Thus, if the media give the program wide support, the community will too.

Social interaction among neighbors may provide the best or worst publicity the program has. For example, if the educational program has made an impact on a mother, she will probably tell her neighbors that she was impressed with the program. On the other hand, if a mother believed that the blood screening personnel treated her child too roughly, this information will almost certainly be passed along to her neighbors with the recommendation not to participate in the program. Thus, all phases of a lead poisoning elimination program should be planned with the consideration that the people being treated are not isolated individuals.

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<sup>5/</sup> Davies, J. Clarence III, Neighborhood Groups and Urban Renewal, Columbia University Press, New York, 1966, p. 149.

It is extremely important to the viability of the program that a broad base of support be established and maintained throughout the community at large. Here, the mass media will probably be the most effective means. However, trying to give original talks to the community at large over any extended period is time-consuming, frustrating, and yields decreasing returns over the course of time. It seems obvious that people tolerate watching the same advertisement over and over, but most people to draw the line when it comes to speeches and news articles.

A word of caution should be interjected here in terms of use of the mass media. When preparing information for use on radio and TV and in the newspapers, great care should be taken to gear the message to the particular medium being used. What is appropriate for radio may not be effective on television and vice versa. Costs for producing the material can be kept to a minimum because the Federal Communications Commission requires that radio and television donate a certain amount of free time for public service announcements. It is extremely important, though, that subprofessional work not be submitted for broadcasting. There are many good causes which have a message to give and, therefore, the material presented to the networks will have to be newsworthy and well-done. The lead poisoning issue should have no problem on the first score, but the second point requires imagination and must be well thought out.



Another useful communication medium, especially for teaching the parents of children who may be suffering from lead poisoning, might be eye-catching posters and brochures. The message to be presented using this medium should be kept as straight-forward, simple, and to the point as possible. Otherwise, the literature will not be read, understood or heeded.

After the materials for the education program have been formulated, they should be pretested on target groups before being presented to the public-at-large. Then any changes in format indicated by the groups' reactions can be made. When the message is presented to the public, an address where people can write for information, or the phone number of a crisis center where a child can be taken if his parents suspect he has lead poisoning, can be presented. The number of responses to this information can be used as an objective indicator of the effectiveness of this phase of the program.

In summary, the importance of getting the basic information on lead poisoning to the people should not be underestimated. The cost and time of doing the groundwork necessary to establish a dynamic education program should more than pay for itself in terms of creating and maintaining community support for the lead hazard elimination program.

#### 4.2. Community Involvement <sup>6/</sup>

People in low-income areas tend to be the objects of civic action rather than the initiators. As a result of this, lower income people often develop a keen sense of "we" and "they". This feeling, coupled with a preoccupation with their personal and immediate problems, causes many outside overtures to be regarded with suspicion.<sup>7,8/</sup> This is not to say that because they are so preoccupied and suspicious such persons cannot be organized in some way, but it is important that they do not organize in opposition to the program. Thus, if a program is to be successful, it has to have at least a "nodding" approval from the affected group.

It should also be noted that the community structure<sup>9/</sup> itself affects the reception of any government program. The more homogeneous the community in terms of racial and social class, composition<sup>10/</sup>, and property ownership (or nonownership), the more probable that

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<sup>6/</sup> In the context of this report, community involvement will be considered to be active community participation.

<sup>7/</sup> Wilson, James Q., "Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal", Journal of the American Institute of Planners 29 (4), November 1963, pp. 242-249.

<sup>8/</sup> Lipset, Seymour Martin, Political Man, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, New York, 1960, chapter 4.

<sup>9/</sup> Goldblatt, Harold, Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal in Urban Areas, Health and Welfare Council of the National Capital Area, Washington, D.C., 1966.

<sup>10/</sup> Composition refers to other characteristics of the community, such as age of the citizens, marital status, etc.

there will be community consensus <sup>11/</sup> about the aims of the program. Conversely, heterogeneity enhances the probability of community conflict. <sup>12/</sup> For example, Negroes, Indians, and Appalachian whites all live in a single Chicago community where children have a high probability of being victims of lead poisoning. The city has had a great deal of trouble getting the Indian groups to participate because they only want to involve themselves in programs which have been established especially for them. A city attempting to generate community support and involvement in a lead poisoning elimination program must carefully analyze the community and then try to anticipate what kinds of problems may arise as a result of the community structure.

In some cities, community involvement in the deleading program may be limited to planning assistance and general program support. In other cities, more active community participation may be possible. For example, in Chicago, inner-city residents are hired by the city to act as community representatives. Their job is to help to keep the community informed of the services available to the residents of the neighborhood. They also provide information to city officials regarding potential community problems and community receptivity toward specified programs.

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<sup>11/</sup> Community consensus is defined as the extent to which citizens in a community share the same opinions and values.

<sup>12/</sup> Community conflict is defined as the amount of disagreement or opposition over ideas, interests, etc.

Other cities, such as New York, are training people to assist in some aspects of the deleading process. The New York City system of on-the-job training is an example of a comprehensive community involvement program which a city could initiate, given the resources. New York City trained its own repair crews (about 100 men) to do deleading and rehabilitation work. These men, when hired, had three common characteristics: (1) they were from lower income neighborhoods; (2) they were unemployed; and (3) they were unskilled. Usually they were recruited on the basis of a recommendation from their neighborhood civic organization. The men who are in the training program are paid \$5,600/yr. and receive on-the-job training from an experienced crew chief. The crew chief is a man with many years of experience at his trade but who has been unable or unwilling to join his particular trade union. The crew chief is paid almost the going rate for his trade (\$8.00/hr. as opposed to \$8.50/hr. for trade union carpenter), and both he and the other men on the repair crew are members of the city union. At the present time, New York City has men learning the following skills: electrician, carpenter, plumber, and finishing work, i.e., painter. Mr. Clarence Martin, Director of the Emergency Housing Repair Program, which administers this trainee program, says that it has produced the following positive accomplishments:

- (1) It has enabled the Emergency Repair Program to keep their costs lower, therefore accomplishing more within their budgetary limitations.



- (2) It has taken people off welfare and given them useful skills.
- (3) It has given the men a renewed sense of pride and accomplishment.

The New York City trainee program is an extremely comprehensive one; however, it may not be appropriate for every city contemplating a deleading program. Wherever possible, some type of community participation program should be considered, within individual resource limits.

A city establishing a deleading program might want to train some men from the lower income community to work on certain aspects of the hazard elimination program. (This could be done in conjunction with the Job Corps). Each city should look at the specific requirements of their program for opportunities for community action, but in regard to the hazard elimination methods, the following point might be useful: the same amount or type of training will not be suitable to all the methods of hazard elimination. For example, there are different skills required to scrape and paint a wall than to hang gypsum board, therefore different teachers and teaching methods would be necessary. Ideally, it would be possible to teach many persons all of the skills used in deleading a home, but each city will have to decide for itself what community action program best matches its resources.

When establishing a trainee program, a job counselor should be hired to work in conjunction with the program. Naturally, it is important that each trainee be placed in the skill for which he has the most interest and aptitude. This could necessitate administering aptitude tests before placement, as well as conducting follow-up interviews after placement to assure that there has been a good fit between the man and the job. Interpreting this information is not always an easy task, and it certainly should not be left in the hands of a untrained person. Thus, it seems essential to employ a properly trained personnel counselor.

If a local government decides that its resources do not permit a training program, however limited, it may want to try the following approach. Rather than keeping a repair crew occupied an extra day or two finishing the new surface, it might be more advantageous to stop the work with a surface which is "ready-to-finish", such as Chicago does. Then, finishing materials, such as paints, brushes, and wallpaper, can be made available through community civic associations and the occupants may finish off these surfaces to their choosing. If this approach is to succeed, the occupants must be made aware that the materials are available free of charge or at low cost and told where to obtain them and how to use them.

Another community involvement program, which is relatively easy to establish and operate, would be to enlist the aid of resident teenagers to collect the paint samples. The city would provide each worker with a standard format for the sample collection and the necessary tools. It would be desirable to pay the participants a small salary, but if the city lead poisoning program budget is limited, the program could also be operated on a volunteer basis. Admittedly, it would be easier to motivate people to participate if they were offered a salary, but a volunteer program in Rochester experienced no trouble recruiting sufficient workers.<sup>13/</sup>

It may be that a city finds that none of these suggestions are feasible. If this is the situation, then they should consider indirect ways to instigate community involvement. One program which would be useful in almost any community is a housekeeping training institute. There are several benefits that would accrue from setting up a housekeeping training program in conjunction with a lead poisoning elimination program. First, all housekeepers would learn what flaking and peeling paint means in terms of their children's health. They could be encouraged to watch for peeling paint on their walls and to sweep it off and dispose of it as soon as it is noticed (in a way, this is a form of deleading). The housekeeping institute would also provide an opportunity to teach the mothers how to temporarily cover their walls until the repair crew could do the permanent

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<sup>13/</sup> Lin-Fu, Jane S., "Childhood Lead Poisoning...An Eradicable Disease", Children 17 (1), January-February 1970, p. 7.



repair job. For example, the women could be given masking tape, cardboard boxes, and scissors and shown how to cover the walls and tape the molding so that their children would not have access to the paint. Another benefit would be to teach the women whose walls had been deleaded how to maintain the surface so that it does not deteriorate and re-expose the lead hazard. A final gain would be to teach the women good housekeeping techniques (based on the aforementioned six points), which could help to prevent or reverse neighborhood blight.

A study has been done on poor housekeeping among low income families <sup>14/</sup> which led to the establishment of a training institute. In it, 18 excellent housekeepers were compared with 18 poor housekeepers living in the same housing project and having similar family size and marital characteristics. They found six factors which characterized the poor housekeepers they studied. These are:

- (1) The poor housekeeper is lacking in a sense of organization and order.
- (2) The poor housekeeper is unrealistic in her work expectations of children and other household members.
- (3) Poor housekeepers do comprehend the social and health implications of household neglect.
- (4) Poor housekeepers devalue minimum standards of housekeeping in relation to other homemaking tasks.

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<sup>14/</sup> Lewis, Harold, "Etiology of Poor Housekeeping Among Low Income Public Housing Families", Journal of Marriage and the Family 26 (2), May 1964, 224-225.

(5) The poor housekeeper's work schedule is determined by immediate demands, usually expressed as "crises".

(6) The daily activities of the poor housekeeper lack a routine framework; no set pattern is followed.

From this information a demonstration project was instituted which showed that poor housekeepers could be helped to raise their standards of housekeeping.

Thus, it appears that there are many positive action programs that can be instituted within a community. However, in planning any program of this type, it is incumbent upon the city government to listen to the community representatives and plan the programs to suit the community's needs. Otherwise, the favors that are being expended may be looked upon only as attempts of the government "to put another one over" on the residents of the lower-class community, thereby dooming any effort to failure.

## 5. OWNER-OCCUPANT-CITY GOVERNMENT INTERACTIONS IN TREATING THE LEAD PAINT HAZARD

### 5.1. Relationship of the Local Government to Owners of Building with Lead Paint Hazards

Although a lead hazard elimination program will have great impact on the occupants of affected dwellings units, rarely will the occupants be responsible for arranging for the elimination work (except in owner-occupied single-family dwellings). In most cities, it is the responsibility of the owner, not the occupant, to repair any health and/or building violations which are found on his property. Thus, the relationship between the local government and the landlord is crucial to actually getting the repair work done.

The myth of the slum landlord is a popular misconception. This notion usually implies a rich, unconcerned, unfeeling person who does not care how his tenants live just as long as the rent keeps coming in. It is also assumed that when this landlord is told to correct health or building code violations he will not do so unless forced to by court action. These are, for the most part, unfair accusations to make. There are some men who are wealthy and also happen to have property holdings in the inner city, but most of the cities which have deleading programs have found these landlords to be most cooperative about making the requested repairs.<sup>15,16/</sup>

Many cities (i.e., New York, New Haven, Chicago) encounter the most trouble with the "marginal" landlords. These landlords generally fall into two groups. One group is composed of young owner-occupants (often with children of their own). This landlord relies on the income from the rental units to pay the mortgage, the utility bills, and to provide a small income for himself and his family. The other group of landlords are the elderly, who supplement their Social Security or pension with the rental profits. Both groups have one characteristic in common--their monthly income may be very small. When a case of lead poisoning occurs, and these landlords are ordered

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<sup>15/</sup> Personal communication to Mr. Michael Thomas from Dr. H. Slutsky, Director, Lead Screening Program, Chicago, Illinois, October 7, 1971.

<sup>16/</sup> Personal communication to Mr. M. Godette from Mrs. Elaine Whitmire, Lead Poisoning Coordinator, Department of Health, One State Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, September 27, 1971.

to make the necessary repairs, many are not able to assume the financial burden. Thus, resistance to the deleading order may be out of necessity, and compliance will not be obtained. At this point, a long and costly court procedure may ensue while a sick child continues to live in a hazardous environment.

In the case of the "marginal" landlord, persuasion of any kind will probably do little to change the situation. They do not need to be persuaded--they probably already are. They need assistance, and this could come in two major ways:

- (1) Give grants to the landlords to cover the cost of the deleading. (Because of the landlords' financial situation, these grants would have to be available within a matter of days, not weeks or months.)
- (2) Provide the materials and the labor necessary to do the deleading free of charge to the landlord.
- (3) Provide a low-interest loan to cover the deleading costs.

The terms of repayment could be negotiated to suit each landlord's financial situation.

#### 5.2. Relationship of the Owner to the Occupants Living in Lead-Hazardous Units of the Building

The relationship of a building owner to a tenant living in an apartment with a lead hazard is largely dependent upon the owner. If the owner can afford to take the action necessary, then he is generally cooperative. However, it has been noted by city officials that tenants are quite fearful of having any repair work done because they are afraid the landlord might raise their rent. This is a very real problem, and it is possible to see two sides to the question.

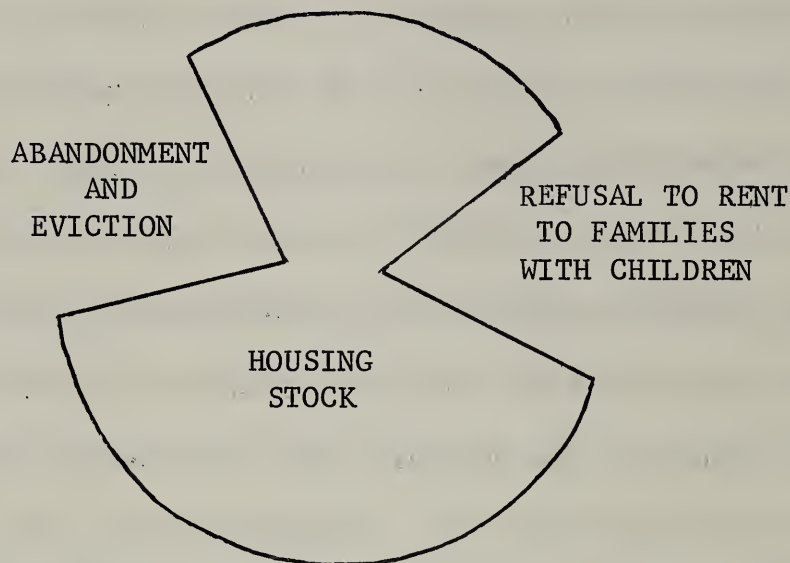


The tenant feels that, "I can't afford to pay more rent, and besides why should I pay for repairing a violation that shouldn't have been there in the first place." Yet the owner points out, "Why shouldn't I raise the rent. I made an improvement on the unit, and if I were able to rent it to someone else, I wouldn't have any trouble finding someone willing to pay the extra amount I'm asking." Each side has an argument that is valid to him, and it is not the purpose of this report to make a value judgement about who is right or wrong. Rather, the situation has been presented in order to make city officials aware of two factors: (1) the rent increase issue is a serious ethical problem which cannot be ignored; (2) short of imposing rent control, there is probably no way to solve the problem.

More serious problems in the owner/tenant relationship may arise when the owner is a "marginal" landlord. It has been mentioned that if the owner of the dwelling unit is forced to make the necessary repairs, he may raise the rent. However, he may also choose to take more serious action. He might decide to eliminate the hazard by evicting the occupants (the reason for the eviction being that the occupants have certain undesirable characteristics) or abandoning the building, both of which have serious social ramifications. By evicting the occupants, the lead paint on the various surfaces is no longer a hazard because the child who became ill from eating the paint is no longer present. The same "solution" occurs when the building is abandoned. Although these appear to be very extreme measures, they are viable alternatives to the landlord who believes it is more to his advantage to either evict the occupants or abandon the apartment and/or the building.

The result is the same for the occupant in both instances--loss of existing housing in an already inadequate housing market.

Another problem may be the landlord who, although he does not evict a family or abandon the dwelling, decides that in the future he will not rent to families with children. Therefore, the same problem arises with this situation as in the cases of eviction and abandonment--further reduction in housing stock for the inner city resident. The notion of a shrinking inner city housing market may be illustrated by the following chart:<sup>17/</sup>



The landlord/tenant relationship can be further aggravated if the tenant does not honor his responsibility to take proper care of his dwelling unit. Certainly when the repair work has been done, the occupant should not deface or neglect the refinished surface.

Unfortunately, the problems that have been stated have no easy

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<sup>17/</sup>Ibid.

solutions. In fact, it is not clear that they can be solved by any groups outside of the parties involved. Nevertheless, the problems are real and important, and any city planning a lead hazard elimination program should at least be aware that these types of landlord/tenant problems may occur.

## 6. RELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL DEPARTMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS

### 6.1. Health Department

The main contact the health department has with the community members is through the blood screening and chelating programs. This has indirect implications for the lead hazard elimination program. The health department is aware that the blood lead test is a frightening experience because 5 ml of blood must be taken from a child (in very small children under 2, it must be drawn from the jugular vein). Also, both the blood lead test and chelating treatment can be quite painful. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that many mothers, after witnessing the trauma of having a blood sample drawn or a chelating treatment, have never brought their children back. Both procedures are extremely uncomfortable and few mothers enjoy seeing their children subjected to unnecessary pain. Thus, it would seem advisable for the health department to utilize personnel in the clinics to explain to the parents what is being done, and to persuade them that it is necessary to prevent worse pain for the children and themselves later on. (This is extremely important because the symptoms of lead poisoning are so vague and resemble so many other less serious diseases that many mothers do not believe their children are sick.)



The mother of a child with lead poisoning does not want her child to be sick any more than any other mother, but if she is not convinced that the pain of treatment her child must suffer will prevent greater harm in the future, then she will be unlikely to cooperate with the program. She may even attempt to prevent having her home deleaded if she is not sufficiently convinced there is a serious enough problem to warrant the family's inconvenience while the work is being done.

Health departments are also aware that lower income families are so mobile <sup>18/</sup> that it is difficult to locate the children whom they are treating or need to treat. (Chicago and New York have estimated that they are unable to locate 20% of the children.) It is true that lower income families are mobile, but usually it is highly impractical to send someone to locate these people. It might be possible to have "Change of Address" postcards printed up and distributed to the parents of each child diagnosed as having lead poisoning. The parents should be shown how to complete the cards and encouraged to fill them out and mail them if they move. If some of the cards are completed and returned, then the procedure can be

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<sup>18/</sup> — A factor affecting mobility is education level--inner city persons may give the wrong house number because they cannot distinguish between a correct or incorrect house number, i.e., 5761 and 5671 can mean the same thing to people who have a low educational level. Often, however, the mobility is "false mobility". Many inner city residents are so suspicious of the "Establishment" that they will deliberately not give their correct address to prevent the Health and Housing Departments from tracing them.

continued. If the return is low or nonexistent, the procedure should be discontinued. Although it is extremely important to keep track of a child so that he can complete the prescribed treatments and his home can be deleaded, there does not appear to be an easy solution to the problem of mobility. Again, it should be emphasized that educational programs, such as the ones described in Section 4.1, are probably the best means of overcoming the mobility problem.

## 6.2. Housing Repair Department

### 6.2.1. Screening for Leaded Paint

It is usually the responsibility of the housing repair department (although in a few cases, it has been under the aegis of the health department) to determine the source of a child's lead poisoning. This normally involves taking samples of paint from the walls and trim of the child's home as well as any other place where the child spends a good deal of time. Ideally, it would be desirable to use a nondestructive test to ascertain whether there is lead paint on any surfaces in the home, but unfortunately an accurate, nondestructive test does not exist at present. Therefore, it should be stressed that the person who is responsible for collecting these samples is an uninvited guest in these homes and should act accordingly. He should be courteous and respectful of the persons whose home he is in. Also, even though he is rendering a service to the family by collecting the paint samples, he should make a reasonable effort to collect the samples from an unobtrusive place. If, for example, he can collect a sample which will serve the purpose from an inconspicuous place, such as under the kitchen sink, then he should do so even if he has to inconvenience himself to get it. This respect for person

and property can be quite influential in determining whether the image of "we" and "they" is reinforced or replaced by a more encompassing notion of "we".

#### 6.2.2. Deleading the Home

Along with the blood screening and treatment, the deleading of the child's environment is the most important phase of the elimination program. How successfully this is done may determine whether the child will be exposed to lead poisoning again (barring the child moving from the lead-free to a leaded environment or finding another source of lead). However, this is a difficult time for the family involved, due to the disruption, and every effort should be made by the housing repair department and the repair crew to help make this transition smoothly.

Aside from giving the occupants a preview of what they can expect the deleading process to be like, there is little more that can be done to ease their fears before the work is started. However, when the repair crew comes in, they should be courteous and respectful, and attempt to keep disruption of the family routine to a minimum. It is here, too, that the effort that has gone into educating the people to the problem will be fruitful. If the people whose homes are being repaired understand the need for doing the work, they will be more willing to accept the discomfort and inconvenience.<sup>19/</sup>

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<sup>19/</sup> This has also been the experience of Mr. Clarence Martin of New York City (private conversation, August 24, 1971) and Mr. H. Brooks, Building Inspector, Washington, D.C. (private conversation, September 30, 1971).

However, this is still no license to unduly disrupt people's lives.

A special case of inconvenience which requires some discussion is that of relocating the occupants while the repair work is being done. It would be much less disruptive to relocate them temporarily in other rooms of their apartment or in another apartment in their building than to move them to another building in the same neighborhood. Persons sometimes become so confused and disoriented when moved from one building to another that their lives can be temporarily, but completely disrupted, e.g., they temporarily could not use public transportation because they could not find the location of said transportation. However, if relocation must be of a permanent nature (because this is the most feasible way of giving a child a lead-free environment) then it would be better to relocate the family within the old neighborhood. Moving to a new neighborhood destroys community ties, and it is difficult to establish new ones because of the hostility to newcomers in certain neighborhoods. <sup>20/</sup> It is important to keep relocation of occupants to the minimum necessary to successfully accomplish the deleading procedure.

Another point which should be discussed in connection with the actual deleading process concerns the extent to which repairs will be made. Experience in Chicago indicates that even though the actual task may be to remove only the lead hazard, it makes little sense to the occupants to ignore other flagrant health violations existing in the home (i.e., stopped-up toilets, vermin, rats,

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<sup>20/</sup> Private conversation with Mr. Charles Fowler, D.C. Government, September 30, 1971.



etc.). Not only does it make little sense, but it has a very poor effect on the occupant's morale and his incentive to maintain his home. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that an attempt be made to rid a home of all health hazards in violation of municipal codes, whether it is under the auspices of a lead hazard elimination program or some other social service program.

Another point which requires discussion is the appearance of the room after the deleading has been done. In a 1962 study, <sup>21/</sup> it was found that persons living in dilapidated housing were extremely concerned about wall appearance. A significant number of people expressed the desire to have smooth, clean walls. It would seem, even intuitively, that wall surface appearance would be an important consideration. Therefore, it is recommended that walls be covered from floor to ceiling and given a finished surface appearance.

Finally, it has been found in cities conducting deleading programs that the peoples' satisfaction with the repair work is directly related to the speed with which it is done. Many people in the inner city are not concerned with what has been done in the past or what will be done in the future, but are concerned with what is being done for them now. This viewpoint is necessary because they have so many problems that they are usually unable to cope with any but the most immediate ones. Therefore, for a deleading effort (or any effort undertaken to elimi-

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Back, Kurt W., Slums, Projects, and People, Social Psychological Problems of Relocation in Puerto Rico, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 1962.

nate lead paint poisoning) to be successful in their eyes, the results have to be immediate and represent a positive improvement in their lifestyle. If these criteria are met, the people will be satisfied because this problem is solved. If they are not met, then the people will chalk it up as another case where they were "experimented with" or deceived. <sup>22/</sup>

## 7. SUMMARY

The social interactions of the various groups and persons involved in a lead poisoning elimination program have been studied. An effort has been made to enumerate and explain certain concepts that can enhance the social interaction process, as well as to point out potential problems. It can certainly not be claimed that this is an exhaustive discussion, nor is it meant to be a guideline which cities establishing lead hazard elimination programs must follow. Rather, it is written with the expectation that city officials will read this when initially planning their program, and make a concerted effort to adapt or utilize the suggestions that seem to fit the individual needs and resources of their community.

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<sup>22/</sup> Brager, George A. and Barr, Sherman, "Perceptions and Reality: The Poor Man's View of Social Services", Chapter 4 in Community Action Against Poverty, George A. Brager and Francis P. Purcell (ed.), College and University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1967, pp. 72-80.







